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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STOCKHOLM 000574

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PINR PREL TU SW

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES ENLARGEMENT, AFGHANISTAN WITH
EU MINISTER CECILIA MALMSTROM

Classified By: Amb. Matthew Barzun for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶11. (C) Summary. In the Ambassador's introductory call on the Minister for EU Affairs, Cecilia Malmstrom, the minister expressed Sweden's eagerness to work together with the United States on climate issues and in Afghanistan. She cautiously said the Swedish EU presidency so far was going "okay" and updated the Ambassador on the EU enlargement process. She noted that:

--Swedish casualties in Afghanistan could lead to a national debate about Swedish involvement, though "basic support" for such exists;

--On Turkey's EU accession, the Ankara Protocol is unlikely to be signed this fall, but there is still hope that the environment chapter might be opened;

--Serbia's EU application may be made by the end of the year, while Albania has been making good progress toward meeting EU standards and its membership application will probably be forwarded to the EU Commission in October;

--The "childish" bilateral dispute between Slovenia and Croatia shows signs of nearing resolution, but the FYROM-Greek name dispute does not.

End Summary.

Climate Change

¶12. (C) Underscoring the strong cultural ties between the two countries, Malmstrom clearly voiced the willingness of the Government of Sweden to cooperate with the United States. Notwithstanding the important domestic issues facing President Obama, she entreated Washington to remain engaged in climate change negotiations. Malmstrom estimated that a global agreement would not be reached at the Copenhagen summit; some, such as India is "not even a little interested" in the climate issue, she remarked. Malmstrom is working, as EU president, to preserve a united EU negotiating stance, and said the Commission would shortly propose funding for climate change measures. She said she hoped that with robust international engagement the "contours" of an agreement could still be hammered out at COP-15.

Afghanistan

¶13. (C) Malmstrom noted that Sweden would be increasing the number of its troops in Afghanistan. Although she noted that the death of a Swede there would lead to a national debate about involvement, she averred that the "basic support" was there, and that the government was very committed to the mission.

EU Enlargement

¶4. (C) The Minister thanked Washington for its support of EU enlargement and Turkish EU membership. She remained optimistic that the environmental chapter of Turkey's accession negotiations could be opened this fall, but did not anticipate that the Ankara Protocol would be signed, and therefore additional chapters, such as the one on energy, would remain blocked. Cyprus must take action before the Protocol can be signed, Malmstrom explained. She was optimistic that progress could move forward during the January-June 2010 Spanish EU President, as Spain supports Turkish EU membership and Spanish President Zapatero and Turkish PM Erdogan are friends. At the same time, she said Turkey could speed up internal reforms in order to make progress on accession. Although she said that Stockholm has a "very open" relationship with Turkey, Malmstrom suggested that pressure from Washington could move things along. "It is they who are applying, after all."

Western Balkans

¶5. (C) Malmstrom, who had just met with Serbian FM Jeremic, judged that Belgrade may hand in an application to the EU by the end of the year. Albania has been making good progress toward meeting EU standards, and its membership application will probably be forwarded to the EU Commission in October. The "childish" bilateral dispute between Slovenia and Croatia shows signs of nearing resolution now that the two have begun direct talks with one another. The FYROM-Greek name dispute has more serious consequences, for without a clear path to the EU, FYROM is unlikely to make other important reforms and

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its internal stability could be threatened. Malmstrom expressed her hope that the Lisbon Treaty would soon be approved, otherwise enlargement would be much more difficult.

Bio Note

¶6. (U) Malmstrom expressed her pleasure at having been able to attend the 2008 Democratic Convention in Denver together with Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren. She and her husband, who is Norwegian by birth, live in Goteborg with their twins, a boy and a girl born in 2003.

BARZUN